30 DECLASSIFIED BL 14 VIETS

INCOMING TELEGRAM *Department of State* (430)

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CONFIDENTIAL

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
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DECLASSIFIED ☑ RELEASABLE ☑
RELEASE DENIED ☐ 27468 1966 AUG 30 AM 12 23
PA or FOI EXEMPTIONS

NNNNVV MJA978JIA781
RR RUEHC
DE RUMJIR 4745 2420350
R 300340Z AUG 66
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC
INFO RUHLHQ/CINCPAC
ZEN/AMCONSUL DANANG
ZEN/AMCONSUL HUE
STATE GRNC
BT

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 4745

AUG 30

SUBJ: ELECTION PROSPECTS IN GO CONG

1. FIVE CANDIDATES ARE RUNNING FOR GO CONG'S ONE SEAT. PROVINCE CHIEF SAYS HE SUPPORTS NO ONE BUT CLAIMS HE HAS SITUATION "COMPLETELY UNDER CONTROL". HE ESTIMATES MOST OF VOTERS WILL GO TO THE POLLS DESPITE VC EFFORTS TO HARASS THE ELECTION. PROVINCE CHIEF NOTES THAT VC HAVE ATTACKED A VILLAGE AND INCREASED OBSTRUCTION OF TRAFFIC ON ROUTE 24, MAIN LINK TO MY THO AND OUTSIDE WORLD; COULD NOT DIRECTLY

RELATE THESE INCIDENTS TO THE ELECTION BUT FELT SURE THAT THERE WAS SOME CONNECTION. ALTHOUGH HE BELIEVES VIEN HOA DAO BOYCOTT WILL GET LITTLE SUPPORT IN GO CONG, HIS DEPUTY FOR ADMINISTRATION SAID THAT HALF THE VOTERS MIGHT STAY AT HOME OR CAST INVALID BALLOTS. BOTH SAID THAT THE GVN WOULD NOT FORCE PEOPLE TO VOTE BUT WOULD SEND CADRE TO REMIND THEM. JUSPAO LOCAL EMPLOYEES WHO SURVEYED SMALL SAMPLE OF ELECTORATE SAY MANY WILL VOTE "TO AVOID TROUBLE WITH THE GOVERNMENT".

2. FIVE CANDIDATES INCLUDE THREE MEMBERS OF THE PROVINCIAL COUNCIL, A TEACHER AND A JEWELER. PROVINCE CHIEF SAYS THAT THREE STRONGEST CANDIDATES, IN DESCENDING ORDER, ARE NGUYEN MINH HUAN, PROVINCIAL COUNCILLOR WHO HAS BEEN ORGANIZING LOCAL LABOR UNIONS AT DIRECTION OF PROVINCE CHIEF; TO VINH KHAM, THE JEWELER; AND BANH NGOC QUI, THE TEACHER. IT IS GENERALLY AGREED THAT HUAN WILL HAVE THE SUPPORT OF TWELVE UNIONS HE HELPED TO ORGANIZE. BOTH HUAN AND A PROVINCIAL

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OFFICIAL IN CHARGE OF THE CAMPAIGN EXPRESSED CONTEMPT FOR STANCE OF VIEN HOA DAO, ADDING THAT MOST OF PEOPLE IN GO CONG ARE ANCESTOR WORSHIPPERS AND ONLY 15 PERCENT ARE BUDDHISTS. KHAM'S GREATEST STRENGTH IS ACTIVE AND EARLY CAMPAIGNING, BACKED BY PLENTY OF MONEY; ONE SOURCE SAYS HE IS BARELY LITERATE. QUI, WHO TEACHES IN SAIGON, IS SUPPORTED BY PUBLIC OFFICIALS AND INTELLECTUALS AND HOPES HIS FAMILY CONNECTIONS IN GO CONG WILL BALANCE HIS ABSENCE FROM THE PROVINCE. HE IS ASSOCIATED WITH THE "MOVEMENT FOR THE RESTORATION OF THE SOUTH", WHICH THE DEPUTY FOR ADMINISTRATION SAYS HAS MANY ADVOCATES AMONG INTELLECTUALS AND OFFICIALS IN GO CONG. QUI WOULD LIKE TO SEE PRESIDENTIAL FORM OF GOVERNMENT BUT WILL NOT SAY SO PUBLICLY TO "AVOID APPEARING TO FOLLOW KY'S PREFERENCES".

3. MOST LOCAL SOURCES AGREE THAT OTHER TWO CANDIDATES, BOTH PROVINCIAL COUNCILLORS, HAVE LITTLE CHANCE OF WINNING, ALTHOUGH ONE, NGUYEN VAN MY, IS CHAIRMAN OF LOCAL BUDDHIST ASSOCIATION.

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4. ONLY MILITARY CANDIDATE WITHDREW ON ORDER OF JOINT GENERAL STAFF AFTER PASSING PROVINCIAL SCREENING. EARLIER, TWO OTHER CANDIDATES WERE EXCLUDED, ONE BECAUSE OF INCOMPLETE DOSSIER AND OTHER BECAUSE HE ALLEGEDLY PROPAGANDIZED FOR VC WHILE DETAINED BY THEM.

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